

To : Mr Chris Lee DIRECTOR, Environment and Regeneration Dept London Borough of Merton

Re : Consultation re LBM Draft Estates Local Plan / Ravensbury

Date : 28.02.2016

Cc:

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COUNCILLORS ON PLANNING COMMITTEE:

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Dear Mr Lee

Making a stressful crisis out of what was an opportunity?

We are private residents on the Ravensbury Estate. Over the last two years, (along with what we believe is a majority of the other residents of the estate) we have been horrified by the bullying, clumsy and stressful way in which Circle Housing/Merton have conducted what should surely have been a transparent and calm/humane dialogue with residents. Your reasons for this initiative (the 'once in a generation opportunity for improvement, and the optimal use of public funds) are perfectly understandable.....so why allow residents to be turned into 'victims'? :

- Bombarded with technical/hard to follow 'planning' jargon
- Upset by 'hard-line' attitudes to what should be a rational and civilised process
- Confused by frequently repeated 'mailings' that seem to be repeating the same messages
- Feeling that residents views are 'just a nuisance'

And now in 2016 we are shocked by the sudden arrival of Circle Housing plans for the hitherto 'missed out' Ravensbury Garages area, and which feature grossly intrusive and overbearing development proposals.

These proposals illustrate blocks of flats that would be effectively 4-5 stories high and built within 6 metres of our garden fence....seriously overshadowing our home and resulting in complete loss of privacy both in our home and garden.

Does Circle Housing listen?

Just a few days later Merton invites us to 'Have your say'...with a document loud in its claims that Ravensbury's existing landscape and positive townscape features will be **strongly protected!**

Density: 2.45

"Development that is too dense may result inoverlooking or daylight issues"too true!....why allow Circle to develop such irresponsible plans?

Ravensbury Estate : 3.201

"It is almost entirely enveloped by a skyline of large mature trees that define its setting as a kind of breathing space in a wooded landscape. This landscape character is reinforced by the River Wandle running nearby'true, but the current Circle Housing plan for the Ravensbury Garages area with its over-sized blocks of flats will completely destroy this skyline for hundreds of residents!

Site Analysis: 3.225

"With the exception of the Ravensbury Court flats, all other flats and houses are two storeys with pitched roofs".....so why allow Circle to propose an oversized 4 storey block in an area of 2 storey housing? (in fact it will appear as 5 storeys due to the lie of the land...does anyone realise this???)

NB: this area is also identified by your own document (3.228) as an area where the views and prospects are important!

Ravensbury Park: 3.241

"Blocks should be arranged to maximize the visual and natural amenity provided by the park,Proposals should ensure landscaping setting of the estate is not undermined".....we refer you to our comments above and to our letter (copy attached) to Circle Housing concerning their totally unsuitable proposals.

Conclusion

Unsurprisingly we (along with most other Ravensbury residents) are now feeling bruised, stressed and distrustful.

We would be grateful if you and your team would be kind enough to explain a) whether the consistent 'landscape-friendly' strategy in your Local Plan is serious (and therefore the oversized landscape-destructive flats in the Ravensbury Garages area will be reduced to 2 storeys and will respect the trees and nearby houses) or b) whether Circle are right, and none of these fine words really matter....?

We look forward to hearing from you